



## ***NEWS RELEASE***

Date: August 30, 2005  
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Number: 313-234-4220

### **DOJ and DEA Announce Results of Major Meth Operation** *200 U.S. Cities Take Part in DEA Led "Operation Wildfire"*

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) Attorney General Alberto Gonzales and Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Administrator Karen P. Tandy announced today the results of the DEA-led "*Operation Wildfire*," the first-ever nationally coordinated law enforcement operation designed to fight against the spread of methamphetamine use and abuse in the United States. Over 200 U.S. cities participated in *Operation Wildfire*, resulting in the arrest of 427 individuals. The DEA and their law enforcement partners found 30 children present in meth labs raided during *Operation Wildfire*.

The local impact of *Operation Wildfire* in Michigan was a significant success due to the outstanding partnership between DEA, the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Michigan, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), Michigan State Police (MSP), Jackson Narcotics Enforcement Team (JNET), Southwest Enforcement Team (SWET) and Kalamazoo Valley Enforcement Team (KVET). This combined effort was a two day enforcement initiative conducted in the following Michigan counties: Hillsdale, Ingham, Jackson, Kalamazoo, Lenawee and Van Buren. In Michigan, 10 clandestine labs were seized, 19 individuals were arrested, and 12 endangered children were removed from their dangerous environments.

"Methamphetamine not only ends the lives of individual users, but also it has the ability to destroy families; it can even ruin entire communities," stated John J. Arvanitis, Acting Special Agent in Charge of the DEA Detroit Field Division. "Operation Wildfire sends a clear message to all methamphetamine offenders that DEA and our law enforcement partners across the country are committed to ending this epidemic that has shattered thousands of lives."

"Michigan will not sit helplessly and fall victim to the evils of methamphetamine," stated Col. Tadarial J. Sturdivant, director of the Michigan State Police. "We've seen the destruction this drug has caused out West and in response; the Michigan State Police has committed resources to education and enforcement, including training 230 officers in clandestine lab response procedures and over 2,000 citizens and officers in methamphetamine awareness."

“There is no drug that has more consequences than meth – for the abuser, for the trafficker, for the environment, for communities, and for the innocent children who live in filth and neglect,” said DEA Administrator Karen P. Tandy. “The meth crisis has ruined families, destroyed neighborhoods and put a tremendous strain on all levels of law enforcement and social services. This historic enforcement effort illustrates our commitment to extinguishing this plague and protecting innocent Americans from the harmful ripple effects meth leaves behind.”

“The scourge of methamphetamine demands strong partnerships and innovative solutions to fight the devastation it leaves behind,” said Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales. “Through Operation Wildfire, we have joined with state and local law enforcement to successfully pursue meth peddlers and producers in over 200 cities. The Department of Justice is committed to using every available resource to ensure that our streets and neighborhoods are safe and that the methamphetamine problem is brought to an end.”

*Operation Wildfire* was successful, due in part, to the varied law enforcement and drug diversion tactics practiced by the DEA and their law enforcement partners including; undercover meth purchases; meth laboratory identification and seizures; execution of search and arrest warrants; identification and dismantlement of large-scale meth trafficking organizations; deployment of DEA Mobile Enforcement Teams to assist state and local authorities in their meth investigations; and the investigations of pseudoephedrine importers, grey-market wholesalers, and retailers.

While the past week represents the largest single enforcement effort against meth, it is far from DEA’s first. For instance, last week the DEA announced the dismantling of three major drug transportation organizations that each month brought in enough meth for more than 22,000 users residing in the U.S.

The widespread availability of meth has made it accessible and appealing to U.S. teenagers. In conjunction with this enforcement effort, DEA launched a new website today as part of its efforts to raise public awareness about the dangers of the drug. The anti-drug website, [www.justthinktwice.com](http://www.justthinktwice.com), gives teens and their parents, the straight facts about methamphetamine and it’s not a pretty picture. The realities of meth’s physical and emotional tolls are plainly described and accompanied by before and after photos of meth users, which graphically depict the ravages of meth on the user and make a strong statement about its consequences.

*Operation Wildfire* resulted in the seizure of 209.48 pounds of methamphetamine, 188 pounds of precursor chemicals used to make the deadly drug, and \$255,570 in cash. In addition, 56 clandestine laboratories were seized in the nationwide sweep, 28 vehicles were seized, 123 weapons were found and 30 endangered children were removed from their meth environments.

***Fact Sheet included separately that includes specific cities involved***

***\*\*\*B-Roll video available\*\*\****